



*Connecticut's Partner in Brain Injury Prevention & Recovery since 1982*

***February 27, 2023***

***Transportation Committee Public Hearing***

***Julie Peters, CBIS, Executive Director***

The Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut is submitting this testimony in support of SB1082: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION REGARDING A REDUCTION IN BLOOD ALCOHOL LIMITS FOR IMPAIRED DRIVING AND BOATING. For over 40 years, the Brain Injury Alliance has been the statewide nonprofit organization that serves thousands of Connecticut citizens and their families impacted by brain injuries every year.

**The facts don't lie**

- Motor vehicle crashes in the U.S. involving alcohol-impaired drivers kill one person every 45 minutes. That is 32 people every day
- Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of brain injury.
- TBIS are among the most common injuries from crashes involving alcohol-impaired drivers
- Almost one in three traffic deaths in the United States involves a driver with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08 g/dL or higher.
- Connecticut's alcohol-impaired driving death rates for 21-34 year old are higher than the national average
- Studies suggest that stricter state regulations for driving while impaired are associated with fewer motor vehicle crash fatalities involving drunk drivers\*

Any car crash is serious but being hit by a drunk driver can be even more so. An impaired driver may fail to hit the brakes in time before impact or even fall asleep at the wheel and fail to hit the brakes at all – they may even accelerate. This makes the impact devastating, especially if the victim's head hits the steering wheel or dashboard.\*

Brain injury is a chronic illness. Brain injury can include physical symptoms like difficulty walking, talking, using your hands, or swallowing. But it also includes changes to cognition and personality. People with brain injury often have difficulty with memory, speech, planning, and problem solving. Their judgement can be altered as can their impulse control. For many of them their very personality and sense of self is forever altered.

At BIAC, we know all too well what happens when you sustain a brain injury. We receive the calls from anguished families when it's too late and lives have been shattered. Brain injuries can't be cured, and they don't go away. It only takes a second for your life to change forever.

Connecticut has the unfortunate distinction of ranking in the top five in this country for impaired driving fatalities. If we can prevent a few more brain injuries in Connecticut by decreasing the legal blood alcohol concentration in CT from .08 to .05, we will truly be saving lives.

Julie Peters, CBIS  
Executive Director  
Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut

[https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/impaired\\_driving/states.html](https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/impaired_driving/states.html)

[bit.ly/2sywvd6](https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/impaired_driving/states.html) and [bit.ly/2spOlj8](https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/impaired_driving/states.html) JAMA Internal Medicine, online May 29, 2018.

<https://www.wagnerinjury.com/2022/05/30/what-are-the-most-common-injuries-in-drunk-driving-accidents/>

\*<https://www.elliottsmithlaw.com/drunk-driving-accidents-and-traumatic-brain-injury>